

Minutes of the Town of Lee Planning Board
June 27, 2022
6:00pm Via Zoom

A regular meeting of the Lee Planning board was held virtually in accordance with Governor Baker's Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law (MGL Chapter 30A, Section 20) on Monday, June 27, 2022 at 6:00pm on Zoom.

Present: Buck Donovan (Chair), Peter Bluhm, Peg Biron, Matt Carlino, David Forrest and Gordon Bailey (alternate).

Others Present: Kathy Hall, Jim Castegnaro, Patrick McColgan, James Scalise, Conrad Decker, Sam Nickerson, Janet Warner, Patty Carlino and Nicholas Arienti.

Call to Order

Chairperson Donovan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. For the record he informed those in attendance that the meeting was being recorded.

Public Comment & Questions for Agenda Items

There were no comments or questions at the time.

Update – Eagle Mill Project

Chairperson Donovan stated that the Board reached out to Jeff Cohen for an update and did not hear back.

Member Carlino stated he attended the last Select Board meeting where Jeff Cohen gave an update on the project. He stated the project has a large funding gap with the cost of everything rising and they are going to apply to the State Housing department for a grant to fill that gap. Member Carlino also stated that the project did get a permit for the demolition but would not start until the fall when the grants are awarded.

Member Biron stated concerns with what would happen if the project does not receive the funding it needs.

Member Carlino discussed the rise in construction and material costs.

Member Bluhm stated he had hoped to see something happen this construction season and now the town has lost another year. He also stated the buildings are getting quite derelict and at some point, the town's patience has to run out.

Resident Hall stated that the town needs to be patient due to the two-year pandemic that stood in the way of the project and that the houses do not seem to be deteriorating in any way.

Member Forrest stated that the longer the mill sits the more it is going to cost in construction.

The Board discussed the effect of the permit expiring and concerns with having to start at square one again.

Resident Castegnaro stated concerns with conditions of the buildings and is worried that they might fall in.

Form-A Application – 98 Woodland Road

Patrick McColgan, Taconic Land Consultants, introduced himself as representing William Crawford who owns property at 98 and 116 Woodland Road. They are proposing to reconfigure the two lots so the owner's house lot will have a majority of the back land. He also stated the lots are serviced by town water and sewer.

Chairperson Donovan asked Mr. McColgan to explain the road frontage plan.

Mr. McColgan stated lot one has 225 feet of road frontage and lot two has 78.5 plus 58.66 road frontage which is more than the requirement.

Chairperson Donovan stated concerns with a garage on the property that may be an issue for the Board to endorse the application.

Mr. McColgan referred to zoning act seven where there is a ten-year statute of limitations.

The Board briefly discussed which lot lines were changing and which were staying the same.

Member Bluhm confirmed that the field is being transferred from the northerly house to the southerly house.

Member Carlino moved the Board endorse the Form-A Application for William Crawford;

Member Biron seconded. Planning Board voted (5-0). (Carlino – aye; Forrest – aye; Biron – aye; Bluhm – aye; Donovan – aye).

Site Plan Review – 200 Laurel Street

James Scalise introduced himself representing the applicant, Ecos Properties. Also in attendance is the applicant Sam Nickerson and Attorney Nicholas Arienti.

The location is the former Roadway Inn and the goal is a change of use under Section 6.1 B in the bylaw.

Mr. Scalise stated the applicant is looking to convert 24 hotels rooms into 16 apartments. He stated there are no expansions, no new parking lots, no physical changes proposed, it's a renovation of the existing building and facility. They are proposing to make the driveway one way and angle the parking spaces to fit better, new landscaping and new lighting.

Mr. Scalise stated the existing building is non-conforming both dimensionally and by use. The setback of the building is 21.5 feet and the requirement is 25 feet. The building was built in 1944 as a motel, the Lee zoning was enacted in 1963 so the use was allowed by special permit. Chairperson Donovan confirmed that the submittal is under 6.1 B (2) and the application is for a change of use.

Member Bluhm stated the proposal might require a special permit from the Planning Board and the Select Board. He suggested a joint Special Permit Hearing with both Boards.

Attorney Arienti discussed the number of units proposed and meeting the six binding criteria required where the new proposed use is not substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood.

Mr. Scalise stated they need a special permit from the Planning Board for the non-conformities, which are the density and setbacks. They need a special permit from the Select Board to allow multifamily use in the zone.

Member Carlino moved that the Planning Board accept the application at 200 Laurel Street for site plan submittal and special permit submittal under Section 6.1 B; Member Bluhm seconded. Planning Board voted (5-0). (Carlino – aye; Forrest – aye; Biron – aye; Bluhm – aye; Donovan – aye).

Member Bluhm moved to set the Special Permit Hearing date to July 25, 2022 at 6:00pm;

Member Carlino seconded. Planning Board voted (5-0). (Carlino – aye; Forrest – aye; Biron – aye; Bluhm – aye; Donovan – aye).

Discussion – Alternate Board Member

The Board discussed having two residents express interest in the position and have both be alternate members of the Planning Board.

Resident Conrad Decker introduced himself and discussed his availability to attend meetings.

Member Carlino stated the Board is fortunate to have Mr. Decker on the Board especially with master plan, split zoning issues and zoning classifications in the future.

Member Carlino moved that the Planning Board recommend Conrad Decker and Harold Sherman to the Select Board to be appointed as an alternate member to the Planning Board;

Member Forrest seconded. Planning Board voted (5-0). (Carlino – aye; Forrest – aye; Biron – aye; Bluhm – aye; Donovan – aye).

Sign Permit – 114 Housatonic Street

Chairperson Donovan stated the sign is 16 square feet and in the CBC zone a free-standing sign shall not exceed 16 square feet. He also confirmed that the sign is internally illuminated.

Member Forrest moved to endorse the sign for 114 Housatonic Street; Member Carlino seconded. Planning Board voted (5-0). (Carlino – aye; Forrest – aye; Biron – aye; Bluhm – aye; Donovan – aye).

Other Topics

Member Biron stated the Historical Society is hosting an exhibit at the Lee Library, in the Peter Scolforo Room regarding veterans for the month of July.

Member Bluhm suggested adding Master Plan on the agenda for every Planning Board meeting.

The Board discussed future meetings in person.

Member Bluhm moved to adjourn meeting; Member Carlino seconded.

Chairperson Donovan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elizabeth Mead
Administrative Assistant